

Spaces & Flows

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The culture of the journey as structure of the landscape: An inquiry on mobility facilities and identity of place.

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The design of mobility facilities today is mainly centred on performance, safety or sustainability issues. The physical and symbolic elements, which characterise these infrastructures as places, are often underestimated. Flowing through a space is an activity which mainly involves movements; it requires artefacts of primary necessity, such as a track and areas for technical exigencies. The journey, on the other hand, is also a cultural experience which requires references and supporting elements, internal and external to the track, in order to structure the travel and orient the traveller. The relationship between infrastructure and context defines the identity of the place; different kinds of way (roads, channels, railway etc.) have generated a precise spatial organisation of their corridor; they have established a system of physical and symbolic elements which form a substantial part of the local context.

Exploring the structure of the travel as structure of the landscape can inform the design of new mobility facilities and the management or improvement of the existing ones. The needs of the infrastructure and the needs of the journey overlap with the physical form of cities as well as of countryside; they can generate interesting and vibrant places if designed in a proper way, or degenerate into hard and harsh environments with no identity.